

Students' Perceptions towards Native and Non-Native English Teachers in Vietnam

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\*Note that although an abstract is missing here (part of APA formatting), an abstract is not always required for a course paper (check with your professor's preference for each individual class).

## **Introduction**

English has become an international language and 80% of all English language teachers across the globe are nonnative English teachers (NNETs) (Selvi, 2014). As a growing body of research suggests, there are certain stereotypes of native English teachers (NETS) and NNETs. (Phillipson, 1992; Holliday, 2005). While NNETs are assumed to have accents and as less comprehensible, NETs are considered to possess perfect English in the eyes of many learners (Subtileru, 2015). A research study conducted in 59 recruiting websites for English language schools in China, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and Korea revealed that ideal candidates were depicted as white, young native speakers of English (Ruecker & Ives, 2015). Over the past ten years, however, perceptions towards NNETs and NETS have been changing, which confirms both strengths and weaknesses of the two teacher types (Wu & Ke, 2009; Florence, 2012; Selvi, 2014; Walkinsaw & Duong, 2014).

This study aims to discover what Vietnamese learners think of NETs and NNETs, from which perceived advantages and disadvantages of both NNETs and NETS would be uncovered. While previous research on perceptions of Vietnamese students has focused exclusively on public schools, the results of this study provide insights into the perceptions of a growing population of learners previously unstudied in terms of teacher preference -Vietnamese learners in the private sector. Furthermore, it investigates proficiency as an independent variable, revealing potential changes of perception regarding the value of NETs and NNETs as proficiency progresses. Findings could provide NNETs and NETs in Vietnam with a deeper insight into perceptions of their strengths and shortcomings so that they can anticipate potential bias and enhance their professional skills. Furthermore, it provides Vietnamese language school

employers comprehensive views over both NETS and NNETs to make informed decisions on their future recruitment plans.

## **Literature Review**

### **Native-speakerism**

Kachru (1986) distinguishes three major types of English users: native speakers from where English is the first language (Inner Circle), nonnative users who use a second-language variety of English (Outer Circle) and non-native users of English as a foreign language (Expanding Circle). NETs, in this study, are defined as native speakers from the Inner Circle while NNETs are considered to come from either the Outer Circle or the Expanding Circle.

Holliday (2005) mentioned the dominance of “native-speakerism” in language teaching as the belief that NETs represent “Western culture” with ideal English language and teaching methods, while NNETs might be described as “deficit model”. However, many linguists have started to question the assumption that NETs are the ideal language teachers and have aimed to address the prejudice faced by NNETs through the nonnative English Speaking Teacher (NNEST) movement from the late 1990s (Selvi, 2014).

### **English language learners’ perceptions towards NNETs and NETS**

Favorable attitudes of learners towards NETS have been confirmed in a number of studies. Kelch and Williamson (2002) found out that ESL students tended to have more positive attitudes towards teachers whose accents they perceived as native. Students perceived those teachers as having a high level of training and education, greater teaching experience and they preferred to study listening, speaking and pronunciation from these native speakers. ESL students in the U.S assumed NETs to be stronger in teaching oral skills due to their correct

pronunciation (Mabooh, 2004). They also believed that NNETs were not suitable to teach oral communication skills although they could be better at using appropriate teaching styles and were able to address students' concerns or provide emotional support.

However, recent studies have shown a shift from "native-speakerism", revealing that NNETs and NETs are perceived to have both strengths and drawbacks. Taiwanese university students reported to expect more encouragement and corrective feedback from NETs (Wu & Ke, 2009). In 2012, Walkinsaw and Duong conducted a research study on 50 Vietnamese public university students of English to examine their attitude towards native-speakerness on seven qualities of English teachers: advanced language competence, experience, enthusiasm, understanding of the local culture, interesting and informative lessons, and qualifications. The study results suggested that Vietnamese learners valued all qualities except for the criterion of advanced language competence as they believe that native teachers' pronunciation is ideal. In 2014, Walkinsaw and Duong conducted another study to examine public university students' attitude towards NNETs and NETs. They found that students viewed NETs as possessing standard English pronunciation and perfect language use; however, they were concerned about grammar instruction and lack of shared cultural background with students. NNETs, on the other hand, were perceived as effective at teaching grammar and share the first language with learners, which accelerates more interaction between teachers and students. However, NNETs' pronunciation was viewed as non-standard but also easier to understand. There were several students in this study who suggested that lower level students should study with NNETs while advanced level should learn from NETS. While lower level students might find NNETs' speech easier to understand and benefit from their clear explanation of lexico-grammar, advanced

learners might prefer NETs to increase their spoken fluency and master different spoken registers (Walkisaw & Duong, 2014).

NNETs strengths were reemphasized in a study of Hong Kong secondary students (Florence, 2012). They reported that local English teachers were able to understand their difficulties, easier to interact with, which helped them understand lessons better. At the same time, NETs were thought to be good at English skills and were able to facilitate their learning. Hence, NNETs and NETs seemed to complement each other. HongKong university students, in another study, were reported to have favorable attitude towards NNETs. They prefer learning with NNETs as they taught as effectively as NETs and made sincere effort to communicate with students (Ling & Braine, 2007).

Selvi (2014) pointed out a compilation of the literature on advantages of NESTs and NNETs. In line with other studies (Florence, 2012; Wu & Ke, 2009; Walkinsaw & Duong, 2014) NESTs were found to possess clear spoken and fluent English, have better understanding of the target culture, provide less error correction and avoid over-reliance on textbooks in teaching. They also have strengths in teaching slang, idioms and vocabulary. On the other hand, NNETs in EFL settings often share an L1 and culture with students, do a better job at understanding students' difficulties and are able to provide appropriate learning strategies. Additionally, they are considered to teach reading and grammar more effectively than NETs. Overall, recent studies have suggested that both NNETs and NETs have their strengths and weaknesses. Regarding recent studies on similar topics in Vietnamese context, there are two research studies by Walkinsaw and Duong in 2012 and 2014. However, both studies investigated Vietnamese university students' attitudes towards the two common types of teacher, NNETs and NETs. In addition, these studies were conducted in public universities, without a focus on the

private teaching sector. Based on that gap, this research aims at examining Vietnamese learners' attitude towards NNETs and NETS in the private ELF teaching setting.

Moreover, it also expands to investigate three major teacher types in Vietnamese private schools. As there are three major teacher types in private schools, this study targets at these prominent teachers. The first type is NETs, who come from Inner Circle countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and England. The second type is Filipino English teachers who come from Philippines (the Outer Circle) and the third type is Vietnamese teachers (the Expanding Circle).

In private English schools, these teachers focus on different English skill areas to serve various needs of learners, from general English communication, grammar teaching, pronunciation to standardized exam preparation (IETLS, TOEFL iBT, TOEIC). The age of learners in these centers might vary from young children to adults. This study focuses on Vietnamese adult learners whose ages are from 18 to 35 as most adult learners in private English classes are within this age range.

Based on the social constructivist approach, Brown (2015) mentioned four main characteristics of a successful language learners: background knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills and personal qualities. This study focuses more on the pedagogical skills of teachers. As previous studies mainly focus on all qualities of teachers (Walkinsaw & Duong, 2012), this study focuses only on pedagogical skills to see the impact of teachers on students' progress. As one of the study's goals is to provide employers of private English centers with adequate information to make rational recruitment decisions, it is crucial to look at teachers' pedagogical skills. For adult learners, teaching effectiveness is the most important criteria in picking a private English school. Therefore, it would be best for schools to adapt their

employment plans in accordance with customers' needs. Particularly, this study examines the characteristics of giving "optimal feedback to students", stimulating "interaction, cooperation and teamwork in the classroom", and "efficiently designing and executing lesson plans" (Brown, 2015).

### **Research questions**

Overall, this study investigates two questions. The first investigates how Vietnamese learners judge native English teachers (N), Filipino English teachers (F) and Vietnamese teachers of English (V) in the private teaching sector based on four criteria: (1) lesson delivery (interactive and interesting lessons), (2) individual feedback in class and homework assignments, (3) lesson preparation (thoroughly prepared class activities and homework assignments) and (4) teaching effectiveness (based on perceived test results or progress).

Though good lesson preparation, personal feedback or lesson delivery might contribute to teaching effectiveness, this is not always the case. Students might find satisfaction with three other criteria (good lessons and feedback) but feel no progress. The perception of teaching effectiveness might depend on various variables such as the usefulness of knowledge conveyed, inspiration or motivation activated during lessons, etc. Therefore, in this study, teaching effectiveness is separated from lesson preparation, delivery and personal feedback.

The second question is whether learners' judgments are affected by their English proficiency levels. Proficiency levels of students might affect their judgment as their expectation from teachers are different based on the perceived strengths and weaknesses found in previous studies of learner perception in Vietnam it could be possible that these perceptions change throughout a learner's development (as hypothesized by Walkinsaw & Duong, 2014. For instance, a beginner might expect more interaction and motivation in an English class while a confident speaker might desire to get more corrective feedback from teachers or join carefully-planned activities. Introducing proficiency as a potential moderator

variable could uncover deeper insights into the perceptions of this learner population and inform the design of research that investigates learner perception of NETs and NNETs. Based on the researcher's personal experience as an English teacher in Vietnam, the hypothesis is that Vietnamese learners of high English proficiency levels (IETLS > 6.5) may highly value V over N or F on all criteria except for lesson delivery (interesting and interactive), while lower proficiency students judge native speakers most positively on all criteria, except for individual feedback. The hypothesis is based on some reasons. First, students of beginning levels who might not feel comfortable communicating in English would be more likely to prefer NETs. NETs, who are normally perceived to have perfect English, could help boost learners' confidence in using the language, especially with their learner-centered teaching methods. On the other hand, for students who already feel confident using English, they would desire to perfect their English performance. Thus, they might value teaching effectiveness and corrective feedback from teachers. In this case, V could be a better choice as they understand Vietnamese learners' difficulties and often focus more on strategies to help learners overcome their problems.

## **Methods**

### ***Participants***

Eight-six (86) Vietnamese participants were recruited on a Facebook public group in Vietnam. They were expected to click on a link to provide online consent voluntarily before answering an online questionnaire. As this study aims at English learners aged 18 to 35, only online data from respondents within this age range were used for analysis. Additionally, participants must have had experience learning English with at least one of the teacher types in private English classes. Data from respondents who do not have study experience with any English teacher type (N, F and V) in the private sector in Vietnam were discarded.

One limitation is that participants in the online survey were recruited in a public Facebook group, which is operated by the researcher (and also, a Vietnamese teacher). It could be likely that some students of the teachers who voluntarily participated in the study could have favorable attitudes towards V due to their experience studying with the researcher.

### ***Data collection***

***Instrument.*** An online survey using Google form was designed in Vietnamese with both rating scale and open-ended questions to elicit data from a large amount of participants. Studies on similar topics by Walkinsaw and Duong in 2012 and 2014 involving self-reported questions were also able to elicit descriptive data. A similar rating scale was widely used in a number of previous studies to gather data on a large scale (e.g., Ling & Braine, 2007; Todd & Pojanapunya, 2008; Walkinsaw & Duong, 2012). As studies on similar topics mostly used rating scales and opened-ended questions, the adoption of the same method in this study is expected to yield reliable and valid data.

The online survey consists of two main parts: background questions and attitude questions. First, in the background section, basic information about participants were collected, such as age, experience learning English with three teacher types and English proficiency level. Second, the attitude questions were divided into three separate parts on native teachers (N), Filipino (F) and Vietnamese teachers of English (V). For each teacher type, there are two different kinds of questions: a 5-point rating scale questions and open-ended self-report questions. Self-rating questions aim at students' judgment towards the four research criteria: lesson delivery, lesson preparation, individual corrective feedback in class and for homework assignments, and teaching effectiveness. Additionally, open-ended questions focus on the advantages and disadvantages of learning with each teacher type.

If participants do not have experience with any particular type of the three teacher types, they can feel free to skip the whole questions on that teacher type section. Throughout the survey, participants are allowed to skip any questions.

The following illustrates an example of a rating scale question:

*While learning with NETS, I find class activities interactive and interesting*

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Strong disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>neutral</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>strongly agree</i>

And the following example exemplifies a self-report question:

*In your opinion, what are the advantages of learning English with Native teachers?*

The online questionnaire was piloted on three Vietnamese students. Based on their feedback on the questionnaire, several adjustments related to words were made to ensure that survey questions were clear to respondents.

## **Results**

Data from respondents were transferred from the online survey tool Google Form to an Excel sheet to perform analysis. 86 responses were collected online but only data from 54 respondents were used ( $N = 54$ ). Data from 32 participants were omitted as they did not match one of the following criteria:

- Respondents have any experience studying English with any of the three teacher types.
- Respondents are under 35 years old.

Respondents who had experience in private sectors with one type of teacher while having experience learning with other types of teachers in public schools were still accepted. However, data from public teachers were not used in the study.

This study also aims at examining if students' proficiency level affects their judgments on teacher types. Students were divided We divided students into four different proficiency levels in the self-reported section. Particularly, when they talk with foreigners in English, they feel:

- Hardly can understand anything
- Be able to understand and answer only basic questions (family/name/age/job...)
- Feel confident communicating only in familiar situations
- Be able to carry out conversations in most situations (everyday & work) fluently.

Based on these levels, we also have another self-reported questions on their IELTS scores:

- IELTS < 4.0
- IELTS from 4.0-5.0
- IELTS from 5.5-6.5
- IELTS  $\geq$  7.0

In the ideal condition, those who choose “hardly can understand anything” would be expected to choose “IELTS <4.0”. However, in fact, there was no respondents choosing the option of “hardly can understand anything”. Only respondents who chose “be able to understand and answer basic questions” and self-rated IELTS score under 5.0 were assigned to a group of basic level students (N=30).

All students who chose IELTS < 4.0 also chose “be able to understand and answer basic questions”. Exceptions are five students with perceived IELTS <4.0 and “feel confident communicating in familiar situations”, whose data were omitted.

Of twenty six respondents with perceived IELTS score of 4.0-5.0, there are seventeen (17) students feeling “confident communicating in familiar situations” and nine (09) students capable

of “understanding and answering basic questions”. These nine students were assigned into basic level group while the other 17 students were put into intermediate level group.

Most students who chose IELTS from 5.5 – 6.5 also chose “feel confident communicating in familiar situations”. These students were also assigned to the intermediate group (N= 21). Data from four respondents who chose IELTS from 5.5-6.5 but also chose “be able to understand and answer basic questions” were eliminated.

Only three students chose IELTS equal or above 7.0, and all of them also chose “be able to carry out conversations in most situations (everyday and work) fluently”. This is a group comprised of the advanced level students (N=3).

As a result, data from respondents were divided into three groups: basic – intermediate – advanced groups. Table 1 demonstrates the number of participants in each group of proficiency levels.

Mean scores and standard deviations of each teacher type based on each criteria were calculated from the 54 respondents and in each group of proficiency levels.

Table 1

*Number of Participants in each group (based on English proficiency levels) (N=54)*

Group level	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
Number of participants (n)	30	21	3
Self -description	Be able to understand basic questions on name, job, family, hobbies.	Feel confident communicating in English with native	Be able to communicate fluently with native speakers

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speakers in familiar situations	in all situations, daily life and at work.
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***Overall perception towards the three teacher types***

Table 2 demonstrates overall mean scores (M) and standard deviations (SD) of each teacher type among all participants (N=54).

Table 2

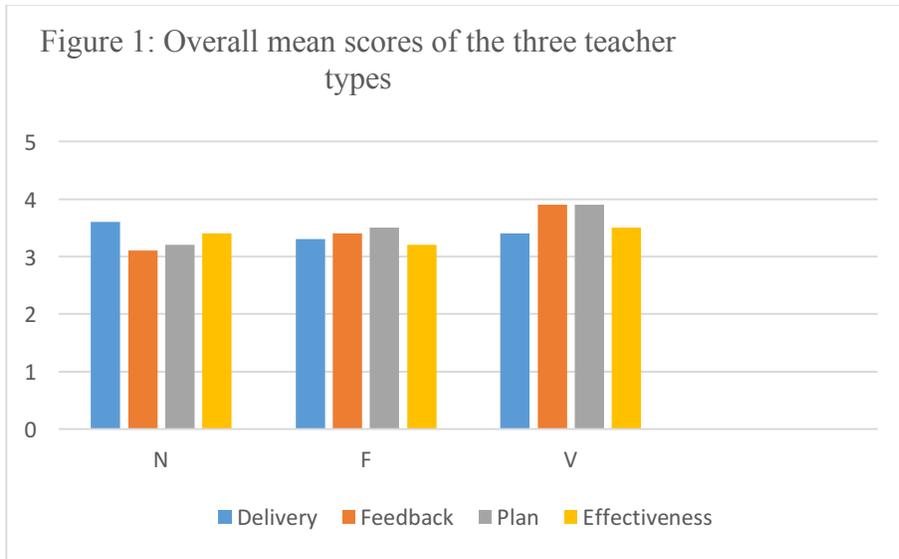
*Descriptive statistics for each teacher type*

Teacher type	Lesson delivery		Feedback		Lesson plan		Effectiveness		Total
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Native (n=20)	3.6	0.8	3.1	0.9	3.2	0.8	3.4	0.6	3.3
Filipino (n=10)	3.3	0.8	3.4	0.9	3.5	0.6	3.2	0.6	2.5
Vietnamese (n=26)	3.4	1.1	3.9	1.0	3.9	1.0	3.5	0.8	3.7

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Figure 1

*Overall mean scores of each teacher type*



In general, V have the highest mean score of 3.7 on all criteria as compared to N (3.35) and F (2.5). Regarding lesson delivery, N have the highest score. V are highly appreciated in the aspects of giving feedback to students (mean score of 3.9) and providing well-prepared lessons (with mean score of 3.9/5). F rank the second in feedback and lesson planning while N have the lowest mean score on these criteria. Regarding lesson effectiveness, based on participants' self-perceived improvement or test results, V get a slightly higher score than F (M=3.2) than N (M=3.4) but there is not much difference.

***Perception of each teacher type based on self-perceived proficiency levels***

*Perception of each teacher type in the basic-level group.* Table 3 demonstrates mean scores and standard deviations for each teacher type in the basic level group.

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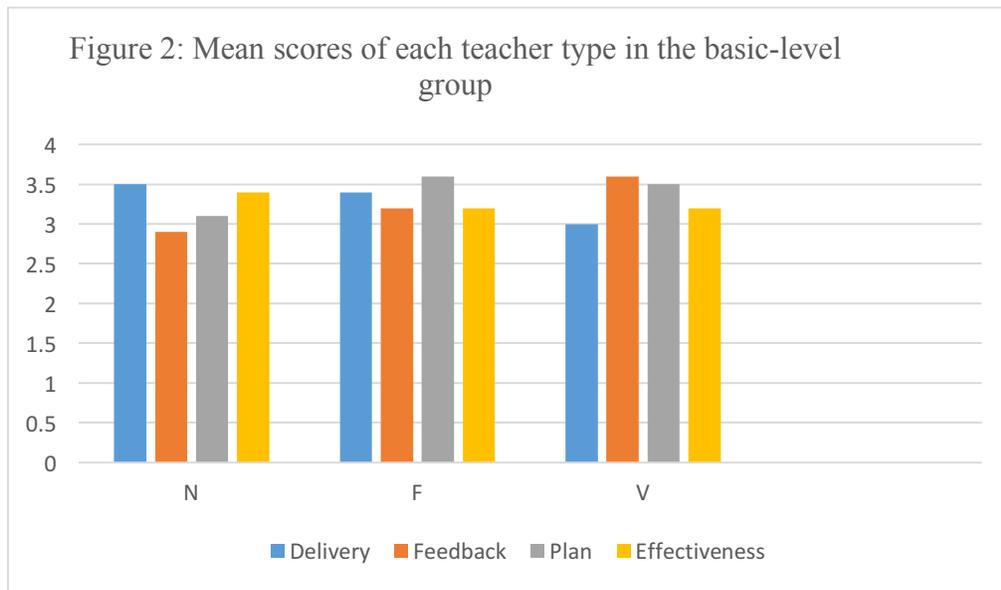
Table 3

*Descriptive statistics for each teacher type in the basic-level group*

Teacher type	Lesson delivery		Feedback		Lesson plan		Effectiveness		Mean score
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Native (n=20)	3.5	0.9	2.9	0.9	3.1	1	3.4	0.6	3.25
Filipino (n=10)	3.4	1	3.2	1	3.6	0.8	3.2	0.7	3.35
Vietnamese (n=26)	3	1	3.6	1	3.5	1	3.2	0.9	3.36

Figure 2

*Mean scores (M) ) of each teacher type in the basic-level group*



In the basic level group, mean score of V and F are the highest (3.36 and 3.35 respectively); however, there is not much difference in mean scores among the three teacher types. Regarding interesting and interactive classes, N and F seem to be perceived better than V. N are also perceived as providing more effective lessons than two other teacher types.

However, V are highly appreciated for individual feedback to students (M=3.6) while N only received a mean score of 2.9 in this area (with 0.7 difference). F and V are thought to prepare lessons more carefully with mean scores of 3.6 and 3.5 respectively (0.4 point difference from N’s mean score of 3.1).

Another noteworthy point is that SD in this group is high (ranging from 0.6-1), especially on the criteria of lesson delivery, feedback, and lesson planning ,which means that students have different opinions on these criteria among N, F and V.

***Perception of each teacher type in the intermediate-level group.*** Table 4 demonstrates mean scores and standard deviation for each type of teachers among intermediate-level students.

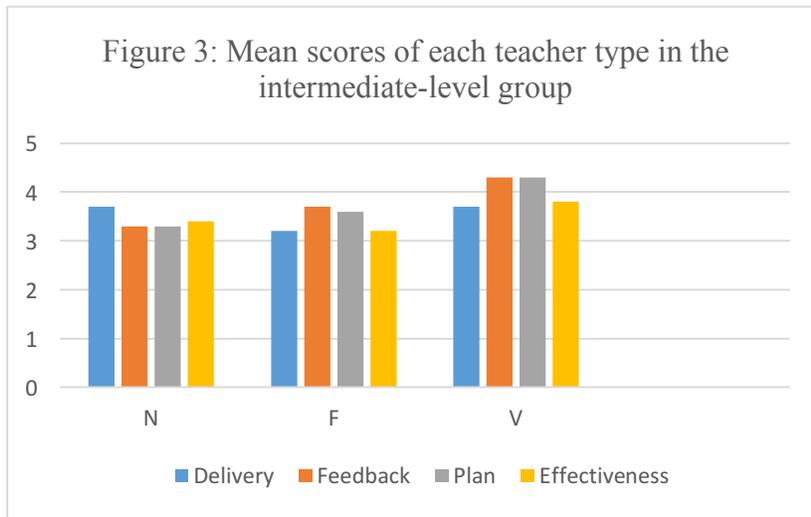
Table 4

*Descriptive statistics of each teacher type in the intermediate-level group*

Teacher type	Lesson delivery		Feedback		Lesson plan		Effectiveness		Total
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Native (n=20)	3.7	0.8	3.3	0.8	3.3	0.8	3.4	0.6	3.4
Filipino (n=8)	3.2	0.7	3.7	0.4	3.6	0.5	3.2	0.4	3.4
Vietnamese	3.7	0.8	4.3	0.6	4.3	0.6	3.8	0.7	4

(n=28)

Figure 3

*Mean scores (M) of each teacher type in the intermediate-level**Group*

In this group, we could see the difference in mean scores between V ( $M=4$ ) and the other two types of teachers (F and N both with  $M=3.4$ ) are more prominent (with difference in mean scores of 0.6). V have salient higher mean scores than N and F in feedback and lesson plan (with difference of up to one point).

However, unlike basic level students, intermediate students judge V higher on teaching effectiveness and lesson delivery. Regarding teaching effectiveness, V received a mean score of 3.8, which is 0.4 point higher than N and 0.6 point higher than F. Regarding lesson delivery, V are perceived to provide as interesting and interactive lessons as N ( $M = 3.7$ ) while F were judged only 3.2.

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It is worth noticing that the SD in this group is smaller than what was found in the basic group, ranging from 0.4-0.8 (compared to the basic group with SD ranging from 0.6-1).

***Perception of each teacher type in the advanced-level group.*** Table 5 demonstrates mean scores and standard deviation for each type of teachers among advanced-level students.

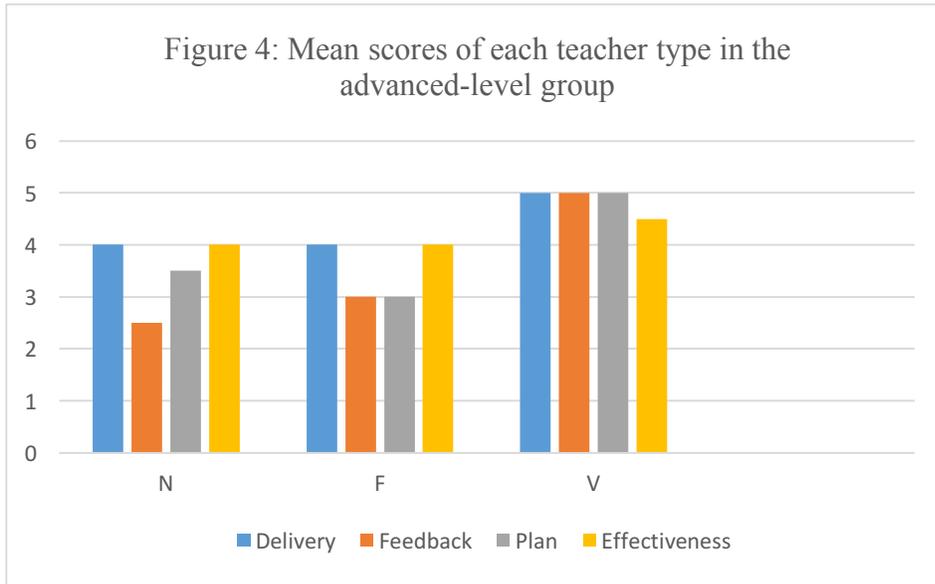
Table 5

*Descriptive statistics of each teacher type in the advanced-level group*

Teacher type	Lesson delivery		Feedback		Lesson plan		Effectiveness		Mean score
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Native (n=2)	4	0	2.5	2.1	3.5	0.7	4	0	3.5
Filipino (n=1)	4		3		3		4		3.5
Vietnamese (n=2)	5	0	5	0	5	0	4.5	0.7	4.8

Figure 4

*Mean scores (M) of each teacher type in the advanced-level group*



Similar to the intermediate-level group, this group highly value V over the two other teacher types. However, the difference between means score of V and other teacher types is even more prominent than the intermediate group (with 1.2 point difference). Particularly, N and F have equal mean scores of 3.5 while V mean score is 4.8. V are highly appreciated over all four criteria.

It seems that the higher the proficiency level, the higher V get rated (from 3.36 in basic level group to 4.0 in intermediate students and 4.8 among advanced students). SD in this group is almost ranging from 0-0.7, partly because there are only 3 respondents in the advanced group.

***Qualitative Results***

Based on descriptive data provided by participants, we continued to analyze these responses to find out what affects students’ judgment towards the three teacher types. Table 6

demonstrate qualitative data on perceived advantages and disadvantages of each teacher type in the three groups.

Table 6

Advantages and Disadvantages of the three teacher types in the three level groups

		Advantages			Disadvantages		
		Basic	Intermediate	Advanced	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
N	Standard	Feeling confident	Perfect and	Language	Lack of	High tuition	
	pronunciation/re	communicating	standard	difference	feedback for	fees and a	
	al English (12)	English (9)	English (1)	affects	students (7)	risk of	
	Students feel	Standard		understandi	Language	“backpackers	
	confident	pronunciation (8)		ng (10)	barrier (4)	” (1)	
	communicating	Understand target		Lack of	Unclear		
	in English (8)	cultures and real-		understandi	instruction		
	Interesting/inter	life English (3)		ng of	(3)		
	active lessons	Friendly and fun		students’			
	(4)	class (2)		difficulties			
Understanding	Feedback on		& feedback				
Western culture	grammar/pronunc		(9)				
(2)	iation (1)						
F	Enthusiastic &	Enthusiastic (4)	Standard	Non-	Non-standard	Not very	
	friendly (4)	Good instruction	pronunciat	standard	pronunciatio	motivating	
		skill (2)	ion (1)	English (5)	n (2)	(1)	

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	Easy to understand (2)	Easy to understand their English (1)	Affordable fees (1)	Unable to correct students' pronunciations (1)	Not enthusiastic (1)	
	Affordable tuition fees (1)			Difficulties in interaction with teachers due to language barrier (1)	Short-tempered (1)	
	Feel more confident (1)			Unclear Instruction (1)		
	Instruction using body language (1)					
	Close to Vietnamese culture (1)					
V	Easy to interact, can use Vietnamese to explain complex problems (15)	Corrective feedback (10)	Shared cultures (2)	Bad pronunciations (17)	Non-standard pronunciation (12)	Non-standard pronunciation (2)
	Understand learners'	Easy to interact as sharing the same language (5)	Understanding learners'	Lack of real life English and lack of understanding	Students feel less confident	Lack of real-life English (1)
		Friendly (2)				

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difficulties to	Thorough	difficulties	ng of target	communicati
help them	instruction (1)	(2)	cultures (4)	ng (4)
change (8)			Uninteresti	Unrealistic
Good at			ng and not	English (2)
grammar,			interactive	Uninteresting
reading &			lessons (2)	lessons (1)
writing skills (4)				

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The basic group perceived the biggest advantage of N is that they possess standard English. Students also mentioned that they feel more confident communicating in English while learning with N. One respondent wrote: *“I feel more excited to communicate with native teachers, therefore, I feel more positive and confident in English communication”*. Basic-level students think that the biggest problems with N is that they do not share the same first language (Vietnamese) with students, which interferes with interaction between teachers and students. Moreover, N do not understand students’ difficulties and give them adequate corrective feedback. What students perceive as strengths of N is also weakness of V and vice versa. V are thought to be easier to interact with, and better at understanding students’ difficulties; however, English pronunciation is their biggest problem. F’s advantages are friendly and enthusiastic but their English pronunciation is not highly valued.

Similarly, the intermediate group share the same ideas with the basic group on N’s strengths and weaknesses. V’s strengths are thought to give more corrective feedback and easier

to interact with due to the shared language. However, non-standard pronunciation is one of the biggest concerns towards V.

Likewise, three respondents in this advanced-level group share similar ideas with the other groups on N and V's advantages and disadvantages. F are considered to possess standard pronunciation but do not create motivation in study. Generally the three level groups of students share similar ideas towards N, F and V's advantages and disadvantages. While V are thought to better understand students' difficulties and provide them with feedback to help them change, N are considered to possess ideal English pronunciation and make students feel more confident communicating in English. Although F are perceived to be enthusiastic in teaching, their pronunciation is thought to be not standard.

### ***Summary of Results***

Based on the above data analysis, Vietnamese students generally favor V than N and F as their preferred English teachers. F have the least favorite attitude on all measurements, probably because they are not perceived to possess any stronger criteria than other type of teacher. Although F provide English-speaking environment in class with an enthusiastic attitude, their English pronunciation is perceived as non-standard by a great number of learners. Particularly, V have consistently higher mean scores on feedback and lesson plans over N and F among all three groups of students. Based on descriptive data, V are considered to understand student's difficulties and are able to provide frequent feedback to students. Thanks to the shared language, students could easily interact with V. Classroom instructions, therefore, become more understandable to students. On the other hand, V only has a slightly higher score than N on effectiveness in general. N gain the highest mean score on interactive lesson delivery. They are

perceived to possess standard English pronunciation with real-life knowledge of the language and the target culture.

Although descriptive data has shown similar ideas on strengths and weaknesses of each teacher types across three different groups of students, rating data analysis from each group shows certain trends. V always gets positive attitude towards their lesson plans and individual feedback to students. Yet, regarding lesson delivery and teaching effectiveness, things would vary across different groups. N are highly appreciated for lesson delivery and teaching effectiveness in the basic level group but not in higher proficiency level groups. For intermediate and advanced level students, V are perceived as delivering more interesting and effective lessons than N and F.

### **Discussion**

In general, the study results have confirmed the hypothesis that NETs are highly valued on their lesson delivery and teaching effectiveness by students of basic levels while V are mostly appreciated over these criteria by students of higher proficiency levels. Basic level students perceive N as most effective teachers who deliver most interesting and interactive lessons, could be explained by several reasons. First, it depends on their perception of effectiveness. These students reported themselves as unable to communicate in English confidently. Particularly, they are able to comprehend and answer simple questions of name, job, hobby or family. They might be more likely to attend English communication classes with N, where they have chances to interact and listen to NETs. Therefore, their perception of effectiveness could be attributed to the feeling of confidence in interaction with native speakers.

Second, the lowest level students might not have strong motivation to study English. Therefore, they would expect a class full of interactive and interesting activities. As it is easier to

create an interactive environment in communicative English classes (which these students could be more likely to join), and a higher rating scale on lesson delivery for N could be understood.

Among groups of intermediate and advanced learners, N no longer have strengths over teaching effectiveness and lesson delivery. As these students perceive themselves as confident communicating in English, they probably do not expect lesson effectiveness as merely feeling more confident in using the language. Instead, it could be more likely that they pay more attention to how well they could perform the language or how good their test results are. In this case, corrective feedback might play a strong role in learners' perceived improvement. As their English has advanced, they need teachers to point out their problems and come up with strategies to improve their English. That might explain why they rate V higher than N in teaching effectiveness as V frequently get highest mean scores on corrective feedback. At that point, N's perceived strengths of possessing standard English might be undermined. The reason why N were not rated higher in delivering interesting lessons among these intermediate and upper students could be explained by class types. Students of higher level proficiency levels might be more likely to join different classes other than communication classes, such as IELTS or other exam preparation classes. In these exam preparation class, it could be harder to create interesting and interactive activities due to the more clearly defined objectives and classroom activities. Hence, advantages of N in using communicative teaching methods might fade. Although the study has revealed certain relationship between student's judgment and their proficiency levels, it would be clearer to explain the study results if information on what classes students took were clarified. Thus, a change in the survey design might yield clearer explanation of study. An additional question on what type of classes students attended could be added, or a question of why students perceived themselves as making progress could be integrated in the survey.

In line with other research studies (Florence, 2012; Wu & Ke, 2009; Walkinsaw & Duong, 2014), the study suggests that both NNETs and NETs possess certain strengths and weaknesses. However, other studies investigated learners' perceptions towards advantages and disadvantages of these two teacher types without making the difference between proficiency levels. Walkinsaw and Duong (2014) mentioned some comments of students on their preference on each teacher type based on proficiency level. Particularly, NNETs were favored in teaching basic level students while NETs were preferred to teach advanced learners. The possible explanation was that it could be easier for low proficiency students to understand NNETs' spoken English; at that same time, get clear explanation on grammar from these teachers. On the other hand, NETs would be beneficial to advanced learners in improving speech fluency and mastering different spoken registers.

As opposed to Walkinsaw and Duong (2014), this study has suggested a different view of proficiency levels' effects on learners' perceptions. Particularly, basic level students highly prefer NETs in delivering interesting/interactive and effective lessons while intermediate and upper-level students place less value on NETs. Thus, proficiency levels negatively correlates with students' perceptions towards NETs' teaching effectiveness, probably due to higher expectations from learners of higher levels.

Besides, the study, which reveals key findings in learners' perceptions towards the three teacher types: NETs- Philipino and Vietnamese teachers of English, has provided Vietnamese employers in private language school systems with an insight of their potential customers' needs. In order to clearly investigate the relationship between proficiency levels and learners' attitudes,

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further studies are needed, with a focus on different learner populations, and if possible, on a larger sample (perhaps with more advanced-level learners).

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APPENDIX

Online Survey

**Background information**

1. Could you please clarify your age?
  - a. <18
  - b. 18- 35
  - c. >35
  
2. Which one is true for you in communicating by English with foreigners?
  - a. Hardly can understand anything
  - b. Can understand and answer only basic questions (family/name/age/job...)
  - c. Feel confident communicating only in familiar situations
  - d. Can carry out conversations in most situations (everyday & work) fluently.
  
3. What level do you think you are right now in English?
  - a. IETLS < 4.0
  - b. IELTS 4.0 – 5.0
  - c. IETLS 5.5 – 6.5
  - d. IELTS > 6.5
  
4. If you have experience learning with Native English teachers, where did you study with them?

You can choose more than 01 answer.

  - a. In a public school where you study
  - b. In a private English center or private class.
  - c. Not applicable
  
5. If you have experience learning with Filipino teachers where did you study with them?
  
6. You can choose more than 01 answer:
  - a. In a public school where you study

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- b. In a private English center or private class.
  - c. Not applicable
7. If you have experience with Vietnamese English teachers, where did you study with them?
- a. You can choose more than 01 answer
  - b. In my public school.
  - c. In a private English center or private class.
  - d. Not applicable.

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### Rating Questions

*Please answer these questions to the best of your knowledge and based on your own experience.*

*If any questions do not apply to you, feel free to skip and continue with other questions.*

### **If you have experience studying with Native English teachers (NETS)**

1. While learning with NETS, I find class activities interactive and interesting

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

2. NETS often give me error feedback in class and homework assignments

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

3. NETS plan their lesson carefully (in terms of materials, activities and homework assignment)

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

4. After learning with NETS, my English improved or I gained better scores in exams.

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

5. In your opinion, what are the advantages of learning English with Native teachers?

6. In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of learning English with Native teachers?

### **If you have experience learning with Filipino teachers, please answer those questions:**

7. While learning with Filipino English teachers, I find class activities interactive and interesting.

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1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

8. Filipino English teachers often give me error feedback in class and homework assignments

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

9. Filipino English teachers plan their lesson carefully (in terms of materials, activities and homework assignment)

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

10. After learning with Filipino English teachers, my English improved or I gained better scores in exams.

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

11. In your opinion, what are the advantages of learning English with Filipino teachers?

12. In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of learning English with Filipino teachers?

**Questions about Vietnamese teachers of English language.**

10. While learning with Vietnamese teachers, I find class activities are interactive and interesting.

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

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11. Vietnamese teachers often give me error feedback in class and homework assignments

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

12. Vietnamese teachers plan their lesson carefully (in terms of materials, activities and homework assignment)

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

13. After learning with Vietnamese teachers, my English improved or I gained better scores in exams.

1	2	3	4	5
Strong disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

14. In your opinion, what are the advantages of learning English with Vietnamese teachers?

15. In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of learning English with Vietnamese teachers?